

# IN THE ABYSS.

BY H. G. WELLS.

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### SLNOPISIS.

Elstead, a young naval officer, is going to explore the bed of the ocean in a hollow steel sphere, twenty feet in diameter. The shell is very thick, has two glass port-holes—one for entrance—and the interior is elaborately padded. It is fitted with electric lights and contains an apparatus for renewing the oxygen of the air. The sphere is to sink by attached leaden weights which hang from it by a cord six hundred feet in length. By this arrangement violent contact with the bottom is prevented. There is a mechanical device by which, when the sinkers strike the bottom, the cord will wind up, pulling the sphere down, and when at the end of half an hour, cut the cord and allow it to rise to the surface. At noon Elstead is dropped over the stern of his vessel, which moves off to a safe distance in order not to be struck by the shell when it comes up.

### PART II.

The ship steamed slowly to her new position. About her almost everyone now was unconcerned and remained watching the breathing shell into which the sphere had sunk. For the next half hour it is doubtful if a word was spoken that did not bear directly or indirectly on Elstead. The December sun was now



### THE SHIP'S DOCTOR CRAWLED IN.

High in the sky and the heat very considerable. "He'll be cold enough down there," said Weybridge, "they say that below a certain depth sea water's always just about freezing."

"Where'll he come up?" asked Stevens. "I've lost my bearings."

"That's the spot," said the commander, who prided himself on his omniscience. He extended a precise finger southward. "And this, I reckon, is pretty nearly the moment," he said. "He's been thirty-five minutes."

"How long does it take to reach the bottom of the ocean?" asked Stevens. "For a depth of five miles and reckoning—as we did—an acceleration of two feet per second, both ways, it just about three-quarters of a minute."

"Then he's overdue," said Weybridge. "Pretty nearly," said the commander. "I suppose it takes a few minutes for that cord of his to wind in."

"I forgot that," said Weybridge, evidently relieved. "And then began the suspense. A minute slowly dragged itself out, and no sphere shot out of the water. Another followed, and nothing broke the low, oily swell. The sailors explained to one another that little plot about the winding in of the cord. The rigging was dotted with eyes. In fact, he'll be all the lower. We aren't absolutely certain that was the proper figure. I'm no slavish believer in calculations." Stevens agreed concisely. No one on the quarter deck spoke for a couple of minutes. Then Stevens' watch case clicked.

When, twenty-one minutes after the sun reached the zenith, they were still waiting for the globe to reappear, and not a man aboard had dared to whisper that hope was dead. It was Weybridge who first gave expression to that realization. He spoke with the sound of a bell still hung in the air. "I always distrusted that window," he said, quite suddenly to Stevens. "Good God!" said Stevens, "you don't think—"

"Well," said Weybridge, and left the rest to his imagination.

"I'm no great believer in calculations myself," said the commander, dubiously. "So that I'm not altogether hopeless yet." And at midnight the gunboat was steaming slowly in a spiral round the spot where the globe had sunk and the white beam of the electric light fell and halted and stood discontentedly onward again over the waste of phosphorescent waters under the little stars.

"If his window hasn't burst and

the water developed a faint ghost of luminosity, and shot past him in faint greenish streaks, and the feeling of his feet and hands like the start of a lift he said, only it kept on. One has to imagine what that means, that keeping on. It was then, of all times, that Elstead repented of his venture. He saw the chances against him in an altogether new light. He thought of the big out-of-the-world people who exist in the middle waters, the kind of things they find half digested in whales at times or floating dead and rotten and half eaten by fish. Suppose one caught hold and wouldn't let go! And had the clock-work really been sufficiently tested? But what was he wanted to go on or to go back mattered not the slightest now. In fifty seconds everything was as black as night outside, except where the beam from his light struck through the waters and picked out every now and then some fish or scrap of sinking matter. It flashed by too fast for him to see what they were. Once, he thinks he passed a shark. And then the sphere began to get hot by friction against the water. They had underestimated this, it seems. The first thing he noticed was that he was perspiring, and then he heard a hissing growing louder under his feet and saw a lot of little bubbles very little bubbles there, rushing upward like a fan through the water outside. Steam! He felt the window, and it was hot. He turned on the minute glow lamp that lit his own cavity, looked at the padded watch by the studs, saw he had been trav-

elling now for two minutes. It came into his head that the window would crack through the condensation of temperatures, for he knew the bottom was very near freezing. Then suddenly the floor of the sphere seemed to press against his feet, the rush of bubbles outside grew slower and slower and the hissing diminished. The sphere rolled a little. The window had not cracked nothing had given, and he knew that the dangers of sinking, at any rate, were over. In another minute or so he would be on the floor of the abyss. He thought, he said, of Stevens and Weybridge and the rest of them five miles overhead, higher to him than the very overhead clouds that ever floated over land are to us, steaming slowly and staring down and wondering what had happened to him.

He peered out of the window. There were no more bubbles now and the hissing had stopped. Outside there was a heavy blackness, as black as black velvet, except for a very faint light, which pierced the empty water and showed the color of it a yellow green. Then three thin like shapes of fire swam into sight, following each other through the water. Whether they were little and near or big and far off he could not tell. Each of the three shapes, as they light almost as bright as the lights of a fishing smack, a light which seemed to be smoking faintly, and all along the sides of them were specks of fish, like the lighted portholes of a ship. Their phosphorescence seemed to go out as they came into the radiance of his lamp, and he saw then that they were little fish of some strange sort with huge heads, vast eyes and dwindling bodies and tails. Their eyes were turned towards him, and he judged they were following him down. He supposed they were attracted by his glare. Probably others of their kind were joined them. As he went on down he noticed that the water became of a pallid color, and that little specks twinkled in his ray like motes in a sunbeam. This was probably due to the clouds of ooze and mud that the impact of his leaden sinkers had disturbed.

By the time he was drawn down to the lead weights he was in a dense fog of white that his electric light failed altogether to pierce for more than a few yards, and many minutes elapsed before the hanging sheets of sediment subsided to any extent. The light by his light and the transient phosphorescence of a distant shoal of fishes, he was able to see under the huge blackness of the superincumbent water an undulating expanse of grayish-white ooze, broken here and there by tangled thickets of a growth of sea plants, which he saw to be the same as those he had seen on the surface. Further away were the graceful, translucent outlines of a group of gigantic sponges. About this floor there were scattered a number of bristling, flatfish tufts of rich purple and black, which he decided must be of some sort of sea urchin, and small flat fish or blind things, having a curious resemblance, some to woodlice and others to lobsters, crawled sluggishly across the track of the light and vanished into the obscurity again, leaving furrowed trails behind them. Then suddenly the hovering swarm of little fishes ceased, and he saw that he was in a flight of starlings might do. They passed over him like a phosphorescent snow, and then he saw behind them some larger creatures advancing towards the sphere. At first he could see it only dimly, a faintly moving figure reminding suggestively of a man, and then it came into the spray of light that the lamp shot out. As the glare struck it, it shut its eyes dazedly. He stared in rigid astonishment.

TO BE CONCLUDED.

### HARMONY AND CONTRAST.

The following is a list of colors which contrast and harmonize:

White contrasts with black and harmonizes with gray.

White contrasts with brown and harmonizes with buff.

White contrasts with blue and harmonizes with sky blue.

White contrasts with purple and harmonizes with rose.

White contrasts with green and harmonizes with pea green.

White contrasts with crimson and harmonizes with olive.

White contrasts with white and harmonizes with blue.

White contrasts with purple and harmonizes with black.

White contrasts with pink and harmonizes with brown.

White contrasts with orange and harmonizes with gray.

White contrasts with red and harmonizes with gray.

White contrasts with black and harmonizes with brown.

White contrasts with lavender and harmonizes with buff.

Greens contrast with colors containing red and harmonize with colors containing yellow or blue.

Orange contrasts with purple and harmonizes with yellow.

Orange contrasts with blues and harmonizes with red.

Orange contrasts with black and harmonizes with warm green.

Orange contrasts with olive and harmonizes with brown.

Orange contrasts with gray and harmonizes with buff.

Orange requires blue, black, purple or dark colors for contrast, and warm colors for harmony.

Citrine contrasts with blue and harmonizes with yellow.

Citrine contrasts with black and harmonizes with white.

Citrine contrasts with brown and harmonizes with green.

Citrine contrasts with crimson and harmonizes with buff.

Russet contrasts with green and harmonizes with yellow.

Russet contrasts with black and harmonizes with yellow.

Russet contrasts with olive and harmonizes with gray.

Russet contrasts with gray and harmonizes with brown.

Olive contrasts with orange and harmonizes with blue.

Olive contrasts with red and harmonizes with blue.

Olive contrasts with white and harmonizes with black.

Olive contrasts with maroon and harmonizes with brown.

Gold contrasts with any dark color, but looks richer with purple, green, blue, black and brown than with the other colors. It harmonizes with all light colors, but best with white. The best harmonies are in white.—W. G. Scott, in Patton's Monthly.

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